

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 00329 211449Z

46

ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 EUR-25 SAJ-01 SAB-01 CIAE-00

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FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WSHDC 5086

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USUN NEW YORK 3398

AMEMBASSY SANAA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 329

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR EG IS

SUBJECT: INTERNAL DEBATE OVER FOREIGN POLICY

BEIRUT FOR DAMASCUS AND BAGHDAD

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

1. IN PAST FEW DAYS, EGYPTIAN PRESS HAS BEGUN TO REVEAL SIGNS OF INTERNAL DEBATE OVER SADAT'S SETTLEMENT POLICY. LINES APPEAR TO BE DRAWN BETWEEN THOSE WHO BACK SADAT, SUPPORT POLICY OF SEEING SETTLEMENT THROUGH US AND ACCEPT JUDGEMENT THAT DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT WILL LEAD TO RESOLUTION OF ME CONFLICT, OR AT LEAST EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI ASPECT; AND THOSE WHO STATE THAT ANY AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL MUST BE REGARDED WITH THE DEEPEST SUSPICION, AND IMPLY THEREBY THAT SUPPORTERS OF SUCH AGREEMENTS ARE, AT A MINIMUM, NAIVE.

2. MOST OF EGYPTIAN POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT IS IN THE
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 00329 211449Z

PROCESS OF GOING ON PUBLIC RECORD AS BEING IN SUPPORT OF

SADAT'S SETTLEMENT POLICY; AND MOST NEWSPAPER EDITORIALISTS ARE TAKING A SIMILAR LINE. HEYKAL, NEVERTHELESS, CONTINUES TO SET HIMSELF APART FROM HIS COLLEAGUES, AND HAS GONE OUT HIS WAY TO EXPRESS CAUTION ABOUT ANY AGREEMENT REACHED WITH ISRAELIS, OR CONCLUDED WITH ASSISTANCE OF SECRETARY KISSINGER. PREDICTABLY HE HAS DRAWN FIRE. ON SATURDAY, FOR EXAMPLE, AKHBAR CARRIED ARTICLE BY MAHMUD ABU WAFIA, ASSEMBLY MEMBER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW OF SADAT, SAYING THAT THE "SINCERE AND LOYAL" SHOULD THE TASKS OF THE NATION'S FUTURE, BUT THAT THE "CUNNING" AND THE "SELFISH" SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM THESE TASKS: THE WORDING ITSELF IMPLIES HEYKAL. MOST RECENTLY AKHBAR'S MUSA SABRI, REFERRING TO KEYKAL'S ARTICLE OF JANUARY 18, CRITICIZES THOSE WHO WRITE WITH PRE-OCTOBER 6 LOGIC, "WHICH IS ONE OF WEAKNESS OF DEFEATISM".

3. COMMENT: AT THE MOMENT, THE DIFFERENCES OF VIEW SURROUNDING EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL DO NOT SEEM PARTICULARLY SHARP, AND MUCH OF THEIR EDGE IS BLUNTED BY THEIR DEVOLUTION INTO ARGUMENTS OVER PERSONALITIES: HEYKAL AND SABRI HAVE BEEN AT ATIPODES FOR MANY YEARS, AND ABU WAFIA HAS HIS OWN AXES TO GRIND. NEVERTHELESS, THEIR ARTICLES PROBABLY REFLECT VALID CURRENTS OF THOUGHT IN IMPORTANT SECORS OF EGYPTIAN POLITICAL SOCIETY AND AS SUCH ARE WORTH NOTING.
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